United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **Julie MacSwain (651) 602-7859**

SAVE ENERGY - SAVE MONEY

ST. PAUL, MN-Jan. 20, 2006--Use online *energy estimator* tools to make energy-efficient conservation practice decisions. A series of such tools will be available on this web site -- from the simple *three-click* estimator, to more detailed tools that may require service center assistance. Click in on the energy *three-click* estimator to find out more ways in which you can save energy:

http://ecat.sc.egov.usda.gov/

ENERGY-SAVING PRACTICES

Crop Residue Management: According to the Conservation Technology Information Center, a farmer can save at least 3.5 gallons of fuel per acre by going from conventional tillage methods to no-till, a conservation practice that leaves the soil undisturbed from harvest through planting except for narrow strips that cause minimal soil disturbance. At November 2005 diesel prices, this amounts to $7.70 per acre in production cost savings. On a farm with 1,000 acres of cropland, these savings add up to 3,500 gallons of diesel fuel per year valued at $7,700.

Nutrient Management: The proper collection, handling, storage and application of manure help to protect our nation's waters and provide a significant nutrient source for crop production. Currently, about 2.7 million tons of manure-based nitrogen are applied on agricultural land. It takes approximately 40,000 cubic feet of natural gas to produce a ton of commercial nitrogen fertilizer. Doubling the application of manure-based nitrogen could save agriculture approximately $1.2 billion worth of natural gas each year. Substituting manure for commercial fertilizer can reduce fertilizer costs as much as $85 per acre.

Windbreaks and Shelterbelts: Windbreaks and shelterbelts can reduce wind-induced erosion and save heating and cooling costs associated with farmsteads. When properly placed to shield farm buildings from strong winds, windbreaks can lower heating and cooling costs by up to 20 percent.

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